

B!
cont.

coating one surface of each of the foils with a plurality of electrodes, at least one electrode being assigned to each actuator in each foil, each pair of connecting openings penetrating the foils through one of the electrodes, each electrode including a cut-out that surrounds one of the first and the second connecting openings;

stacking the plurality of foils into a stacked arrangement so that the first and second connecting openings of each foil are vertically aligned with the first and second connecting openings of remaining foils, a layer sequence of the foils being selected such that the cut-outs surround the first connecting openings in a first set of alternate layers of the foils and the cut-outs surround the second connecting openings in a second set of alternate layers of the foils;

introducing an electrically conductive paste into the connecting openings, whereby the electrodes assigned to each actuator on each set of alternate layers of the foils become electrically connected;

firing the stacked arrangement; and

separating the stacked arrangement into individual actuators.

19. (New) The method according to claim 18, wherein intermediate areas are provided on the surface of each foil in edge areas between the individual actuators, each of the intermediate areas being left free of the electrodes.

20. (New) The method according to claim 19, further comprising the step of forming perforation holes in the intermediate areas.

21. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the perforation holes are arranged in lines extending in the intermediate areas along the edges of the individual actuators.

B1
cancel.

22. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the step of separating the stacked arrangement into individual actuators includes applying an oppositely poled electrical field to the electrodes of adjacent actuators.

23. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the step of separating the stacked arrangement into individual actuators includes sawing or water-jet cutting the stacked arrangement.

24. (New) The method according to claim 18, further comprising the step of drying the stacked arrangement under pressure at an increased temperature prior to the firing step.

25. (New) The method according to claim 18, wherein the step of coating the foils with a plurality of electrodes is performed using one of a screen-printing technique, a vapor a depositing, and a sputtering.

26. (New) The method according to claim 18, wherein the step of firing the stacked arrangement includes sintering under uniaxial pressure at a temperature of at least 1,000° C.--.

REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

Claims 18 to 26 are currently pending in this application. Applicants have canceled claims 14-17 and have introduced claims 18 to 26. Claim 14 was in independent form, with claims 15 to 17 ultimately depending from claim 14. The Examiner has rejected claims 14 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,390,287 to Sonderegger ("the Sonderegger patent"), U.S. Patent No. 5,877,581 to Inoi et al ("the Inoi patent"), or U.S. Patent No. 6,172,447 to Ishikawa et al ("the Ishikawa patent").